

# **English Bowls Umpires Association**

## **Minutes of an Executive Meeting held on 15 February 2015 at Oxford C & C BC, Oxford**

### **Present**

Mavis Wellington	–	Chairman
Vernon Findell	–	Secretary/Treasurer
Jessie Clark	–	Deputy Secretary
Phyl Jones	–	Deputy Chairman
Val Coldwell	–	Area Secretary
Carol Watt Sullivan	–	Area Secretary/Safeguarding Officer
Ray Keen	–	Area Secretary
Brain Burton	–	Area Secretary
John Davies	–	Area Secretary
Bob Penny	–	Area Secretary

### **1. Chairman's Opening Remarks**

Mavis welcomed everyone to the meeting. She said that this was an especially important meeting as it was the one prior to the AGM.

She thanked Vernon for dealing with the issue of the new Laws of the Sport to all the members adding that several members had said what a good idea it was to issue them and asking that Vernon be thanked for issuing them

### **2. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies had been received from Allan Thornhill (Development Officer) Geoff Day (EIBA Ltd – observer) and Gillian Wonnacott (EIBA Ltd – observer)

### **3. Minutes of the previous meeting**

Jessie asked that the item concerning Andy Ewing be amended to show his title as 'World Director for Europe – Development'.

The minutes of the previous meeting were proposed by Carol, seconded Ray and signed by Mavis Wellington as a true record.

### **4. Matters arising**

Vernon reported that he had written to Bowls England concerning the changes we were requesting to the levy on counties and had been asked to supply specific information to enable them to further discuss our proposal.

### **5. Correspondence**

Correspondence received by the Secretary had been summarised by the Secretary on a spreadsheet distributed to the EC members and specific items were discussed

### **6. Secretary's Report.**

Vernon reported:-

This is my third report to the committee, and still enjoying it, contrary to what people think.

All the paid up members received a copy of the new L.O.T.S edition 3 plus the latest displacement card sets for outdoors. I have had a lot of nice comments and thanks from members on this very generous gift.

I also sent to everybody who had paid their subs an application form for duties at Leamington, it seems as though half of them wanted them filled in as well, as to date I have had 57 replies for umpiring and 17 for marking. I know it is past the date, but if you have got anyone you think could apply please will you give them a nudge, especially for marking on the following dates in August 7<sup>[1st Session]</sup>, 11<sup>{Afternoon}</sup>, 25<sup>[Noon]</sup> & 27<sup>[1st Session]</sup>. Maybe the switch to Leamington was not in our interests, as we were always oversubscribed in Worthing.

As I informed you, I went to the EIBA competition meeting, and I feel had a very good day, so will re-iterate what I put in my e-mail to you.

Next indoor season, mileage for Atherley Trophy and Liberty Trophy will be paid for by the 2 counties concerned, as National Championship Rules for the above competitions, rule 7.

Rule 5.4 after "rounds" 4th line insert "and contacting the EBUA area secretary for umpires."

Rule 5.10 Delete "competent person" twice and insert "in conjunction with the EBUA county co-ordinator"

Rule 7.5. inclement weather [insert on the day of play]

Rule 8.4 they to specify "extended arm" as I pointed out, gloves, walking sticks and telescope type things for looking down the green are artificial aids.

Rule 9.6 It was brought up about artificial cigarettes, and they will arrange to have these banned, if the Club in question bans them.

#### **Additional Rules for National Team Championships**

Rule 3 an umpire, in preference to a competent person is required for all rounds

Rule 8 4th line, delete "if the game.....nominated rink".

Atherley & Liberty trophy games.

Rule 6. Delete the wording competent person, as I explained to the committee there is always at least 1 umpire for all these games, so no need for competent person.

There may be other little snippets, so when I get copy of their minutes will relay the rest to you all

I would like to thank Allan, and his motley crew for up-dating the manual, and also Chawton Park for the use of their facilities, and a very great thank you to the photographer who did not charge us at all. Thank you.

There has been a lot of talk about these new "streaked" Aero bowls, they have been agreed with B.E. and EIBA Ltd so there is nothing that can be done by us, not I feel that we should be involved anyway, this is a commercial firm supplying them and I actually marked a game at Hayling Island Champion of Champions and they are not that bad.

The correspondence list is a bit shorter this time, but all queries are being sorted, with help from you all.'

The committee discussed the amendments agreed with the EIBA Ltd and thought them to be sensible clarification.

#### **7. Treasurer's Report**

Vernon also reported as follows

'Even under difficult and declining income we still made a healthy profit.

#### **INCOME**

Sales, down by £2800-00 but purchases down as well, by £5283-00

Course/Exam fees up by £438-00, but expenses, which I had made provision for are up by £1870-00 which equates roughly for Allan & Vic visiting all venues where exam/courses were taking place, and hopefully we will all now be doing the same course.

Donations, well down by £1522-00 due to the "levy" being put on all outdoor counties The "grants" are made up of B.E. £5500-00, £3500-00 from all counties by way of the levy, and EIBA of £2300-00.

And, as I always say, the icing on the cake is the donations by some of the umpires who give up their time, and money, to the tune of £1074-00

### EXPENDITURE

We had to have a top up of the old Manuals, due to more entrants, I have suggested that we sell these to markers who could see the basics of our working. Suggestions ??

Postage, up by £698-00, as in previous year bought to beat price rise, which was substantial.

Travelling, up by £3764-00, obviously due to fewer umpires, but also I feel the enhanced payment of 40p a mile, but as mentioned in an earlier correspondence, due to the large drop in price of petrol & diesel, from the start of the outdoor season this will be reduced to 30p a mile.

Printing up a little, one reason I had the membership cards printed at Staples, and I feel the £50-00 cost was worth it, in actual fact it was cheaper than the cards which I bought to produce same.

We have had to write off a computer and printer, held by the previous Secretary.

### MEMBERSHIP

As of today's date the membership list is as follows

Fully paid up members	559
Markers	51
Non Active, but paid	67
Giving us a total of	677

Compared to this time last year a total of all paid members was 802

So hopefully the new markers will realise how much more interesting umpiring is and join up.

13 have died, the rest have either, retired, not taken re-test, deleted after 3 reminders of subs, or dislike of uniform.

### LIST OF DECEASED MEMBERS

Mel Hunter  
Charlie Jackson  
Janet Leyland-Naylor  
Francis Newton  
Mary Porter  
Peter Rowland  
Bill Sammons (ex-Treasurer)  
John Steele  
Christine Sugarhood  
Alan Taylor  
Jim Weir  
Florence Williams  
Eric York

The Committee agreed (proposed Phyl Jones, seconded Ray Keen) that the remaining Home Study manuals from the original print be destroyed.

It was also agreed that a shortened version of the outline of expenses payable by the Association would be put on the website after amendment to include the Walker Cup, and the Balcombe and White Rose Trophies.

## **8. Development Officer's Report**

Allan had submitted his report as follows:-

### Laws of the Sport amendments

The new copies of the Laws were available from Bowls England in November and a copy has been sent to each EBUA Member.

We worked closely with Bowls England to amend the domestic regulations and these were approved by World Bowls and printed on the back cover of the law book. The only major change to note is Domestic regulation 4 which allow the delegation of the scorecard under Law 40.1

A summary document containing the changes to the laws was published on the EBUA website and a notification sent to all members informing them of its publication. Despite this I still have people ask me what the changes were to save them comparing both books!!

The Laws will take effect in England from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015

### Workshops & Examinations

There has been only one workshop and examination session since the last meeting and that was in Harrogate. 2 new candidates passed and 1 failed. More worrying was that of the 5 umpires due a requalification on 2 turned up and 1 of those failed – Apathy in the North??

A number of Workshops and Examinations are now in the calendar for 2015 as follows:

28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> March @ Westlecot

11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> April @ Leicester

9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> May @ Acle

5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> December @ Bristol

Other dates are being planned.

### **Markers Courses**

A large number of Markers courses have been held already in 2015. Since last October a total of 240 candidates have taken the course. There are many more courses being arranged around the country in the coming months which is excellent. The updated procedures information has been published on the website and the new materials sent to all Marking Course tutors. The course was updated to reflect the changes to the Laws.

Certificates of Competence are now obtained by working assessment and a number of EBUA Markers have successfully been assessed and received certificates. There are still some gaps in the process which need filling and I will be working on these in the next couple months prior to the AGM.

There needs to be a clear communication of the candidates that have joined the EBUA as Markers and have completed an assessment. This needs to go to the Area Secs and the County Coordinators so that we can start using these markers in competitions both locally and nationally. I will work with Vernon on a solution to this.

## Training Manual

The Training Manual has now been revised in line with the new laws. It did require a significant rewrite of the Laws section due to the restructuring of the Law book. I also took the opportunity to reshoot some of the photos and I am extremely grateful to Nick Anderson from Hampshire for taking the time to do this at no charge to us.

The manual was printed in early January and is now available on the website for purchase as usual.

## Displacement Cards

The displacement cards have been revised and have been printed professionally. A set of these was sent to all EBUA Members with their Law books. They are now available for courses for new candidates.

## Log Books

Log books have been available for some time now but not much has been done with them which is my fault.

There is a little disconnect over when and how they should be distributed. My view is that they should be given to new members of the EBUA only either as Markers or Umpires and should be distributed at the time of joining. I am working with Vernon to find the best way of doing this. An alternative is to make them available online at a nominal fee to cover postage. I would appreciate any thoughts on this.

## Examination and Workshop Documents

All of the workshop and examination documents have been updated together with the procedures document in line with the changes to the Laws. These are available now for course tutors and examiners and will be distributed prior to the workshop and exam sessions.

## Personnel

Mich Van Putt has tentatively agreed to shadow Alex Duckworth as training administrator following his announcement last year to retire. Alex and I will be working with Mich in the coming months to ensure she is comfortable with the role.

We are still very short of Tutors. Currently we have myself, Val Coldwell and Alison Welstead. The time that Andy Ewens can dedicate to the role is limited due to his new World Bowls commitments. Unfortunately a couple of interested people have failed to commit but we will keep working to find suitable victims.

## Working Assessments

The next major task is to evaluate a process for working assessments which was promised to the membership at the last AGM and is in the 5 year plan. I have already identified a small team to take this forward and will be working with them through the summer to come up with a plan.

If this works well then I see it replacing the need for umpires to attend a 4 yearly retest which places them in a false environment and give examiners a false impression of their abilities.

### Personal commitments

As mentioned in my last report in October, the past few months have seen my work commitments place a huge strain on my time and I have tried to get a balance between work, family and bowls. I apologise if communication has been slow during this period. Thankfully things are becoming a little easier and a little less stressful as I am now the proud owner of a new £25m Cancer Research Laboratory. I will try my best to pick up the pace in the next few months.'

The Committee discussed the points raised by Allan in his report and agreed:-

- Log-books should only be issued to new members on joining the Association, and the stock should be transferred to Vernon It was agreed that this would be accomplished by Vernon including them in the pack he prepares for umpires when they first qualify and for markers he would issue them when he sends the pack when they join the Association.
- It was agreed that there was a need for a set procedure to ensure that both Area Secretaries and County co-ordinators know when a person applies for training.
- An on line version of the logbook be make available

The Committee also asked if it could be confirmed that Mich Van Putt was in fact taking over as Training Administrator

Val Coldwell was concerned by the suggestion that there was apathy in 'the north' in respect of the examinations and pointed out that on the day in question the weather had been bad, and people had therefore been reluctant to travel the distances to attend

## **9. Area Secretaries Reports**

### Area 1 – Val Coldwell

Val reported as follows:-

The general indoor games have been successfully covered by a number of umpires in the north. I feel that the county secretaries are just beginning to start to use the correct channels for appointing umpires but there is still a way to go. Stanley co Durham is once more going to host the internationals and the British Isles championships in March.

This month we held exams assessments in Harrogate, unfortunately the weather was not kind, and there was snow about so we had 5 people who did not attend. We also had 3 people who failed but to end on a brighter note we have 3 new regional umpires 1 re-qualified national umpire, and 1 national upgrade.

### Area 2 – Brian Burton

Brian reported as follows:-

It's been a weird season again. Up to early January was the quietest on record with relatively few requests, but since then I have been very busy with requests coming in hourly on some days & they are still coming in!! Still, it's better that way than the other.

The exodus continues, we are still losing more umpires than we are gaining at the moment in spite of drives to encourage more people. We had to cancel a Marker course at Shrewsbury IBC through lack of interest – 3 people all told including the organiser and this is a newish club without any Markers or Umpires.

We ran a Markers course at Erewash earlier last year with 38 attending, but so far, not a single enquiry even after following up.

The problem becomes more noticeable when they arrange a Liberty semi-final, an Under 15's Final & an Under 18's final on the same weekend in Lincolnshire where we are now down to four umpires & ten required. Importing umpires increases Vernon's temperature as he sees the expense sheets.

We lost the services of Francis Fletcher, one of our stalwarts due to an apparently simple accident but which has put him out of action for the entire indoor season.

In March, we are running a Marker course at Leicester, which we have not advertised as we have over 30 names already. Encouragingly, it is being done in conjunction with the Leicester County organisation.

We have another in the planning stage for Northamptonshire and will advise dates as the situation clears, most likely mid-July.

We are running our first Workshop of the year on April 11/12 at Leicester Slater St., and looks like this will be supported with around 15 candidates, lower than usual – the usual mixture of tests, retests & upgrades.

I attended a BDA Hotspot seminar at Desborough (Northants) in January as the EBUA representative. There were well over 100 people attending and we had quite a bit of interest shown and a number of issues raised on interpretation of the Laws which has sparked the request for a Marker course in the County.

In the summer, we have the usual VIBE Singles & Pairs at Leamington, where we need all the help we can get. It can run to over 200 matches across three greens through the week and most matches will require a Marker. For those who have never handled a VIBE match, it is quite an experience as they have yet to go metric and some of the obvious Laws go out of the window. Volunteers invited from all areas – no pay but you will be fed & watered well and earn the gratitude of a number of people who are not going to let their handicap spoil their fun.

We have also been asked to host the World CP games at Gedling, likely to be at the end of August, lasting for around 4-5 days

One of the newcomers tells me that he has just purchased a full Drakes Pride Umpires kit in its case, but it does not include a line measure – anyone else found this?

### Area 3 – Bob Penny

Bob reported as follows:-

At the time of preparing this report Area 3 membership details are being finalised with members who have not paid their 2015 subscriptions being followed up to determine their intended membership status. It is anticipated that numbers will be less than 2014. Numbers in some counties are particularly low which makes the efforts by those stalwarts who make themselves available to assist in games and support the players and the sport all the more appreciated.

It has been disappointing that some members have chosen to leave the Association stating the uniform requirement as a reason. We are grateful for living in a democracy and with the uniform choice being selected by the majority, all members have the opportunity to take such regrettable action.

I confirm my sincere appreciation for the time and effort made by the County Coordinators in considering and allocating umpires for local and county games. Without their assistance the allocation of markers and umpires would be a slow and ineffective process with a real possibility of umpires being given duties which may be beyond their scope and abilities. It is unfortunate that of the 7 counties within Area 3 there are only 4 County Coordinators. Between us we work with the County Secretaries to plan appointments and with the number of umpires and markers at our disposal it is sometimes not possible to provide umpire or marker support in response to all requests.

There remain some active members of the Association who consider that the way they have always done things is the correct approach. Feedback from some players and Team Managers suggests there remains a mixed level of performance. There are some exceptionally good umpires and markers in Area 3 but there are also some who feel that the umpire's uniform gives them licence to control and influence the game. This demonstrates the importance of the training and development programme in making every effort to raise the level of marking and umpiring to a consistently high level. Although membership levels may be low it is important for the Association that when we are on duty the standards being delivered are acceptable. I and my County Coordinators will not allocate an umpire to a game that we feel would be beyond their capabilities and umpires who have chosen to impose their influence or inaccurate law interpretation on games will also be carefully considered for future game appointments. I would rather have no umpire or marker appointed and have the Controlling Body nominate a competent person than allocate an umpire who would bring down the reputation of the Association. If high standards are delivered by the Association, the importance of appointing an umpire rather than a competent person is clearly demonstrated.

The Acle IBC has been booked for a training and development workshop in May 2015 and enquiries are being made with clubs in the west of the Area for a course in Sept/Oct 2015.

A very successful Markers training seminar was held in January at Havering IBC attended by 34 players. The afternoon session was supported by a further 4 umpires. Thank you to all of you. This was the first Markers seminar held in Area 3 and my appreciation is passed to Tony Hatch for his excellent preparation and presentation of the event. I will be seeking umpires from other counties within the Area to attend future events so that they can pick up the skills and the information necessary to deliver these seminars in their local area. The feedback of those attending the Havering seminar was excellent and several participants have indicated their desire to take further marking and umpire training. Staging the event over 1 day worked well although it was a lot of information for the participants to take in but in terms of commitment from the trainers and the participants it is perhaps on balance the way forward if these courses are to be repeated across the Area.

I am very grateful to those who come forward and make themselves available to assist at games. We are all volunteers who have a love for the sport of bowls. We are there to support the players and make it enjoyable for all.

#### Area 4 – Carol Watt Sullivan

Carol reported as follows:-

It has been a busy winter season so far throughout the south east with staffing events throughout the counties as well as dealing with the inter-area national



competitions. Opportunities have been taken, wherever possible to mentor new regional umpires and develop them and give feedback using our new log books.

As ever with the turn of the year comes our renewal of subscription and a number of members have chosen to hang up their callipers (some in part due to the phasing out of the old uniforms).

Whiteoak IBC (Swanley) hosted the finals of the Under 25s – Men and Ladies when over 2 days 11 of our regional, national and international umpires based in North Kent provided the marking and umpiring duties to enable these competitions to proceed. From all accounts all went well and the EIBA were pleased with our services (and the opportunity was also taken to assess marking skills under testing conditions – a noisy air conditioning system for one).

The number of requests for Markers courses continues to grow, with demands increasing in all the counties. A considerable number of events have been held in Surrey, Middlesex, Kent and Middlesex with existing members also attending preparatory to requalification. Other events are also in the pipeline in the next few months before the outdoor season commences. A number have been advertised on the EBUA web-site, with others being organised locally. All seem to have been well received.

Attention is now turned to organising assessment weekends for existing members to requalify and new members to attain their EBUA regional status and enable upgrades to occur at venues which can accommodate umpires fairly close to 'home'. Dates are currently being sought which do not 'clash' with other commitments.

#### Area 5 –Ray Keen

Ray reported that he had organised 2 workshop weekends for his area as members had pointed out the distances involved in travel to Westlecot from some locations. He had organised a workshop at Bristol at the end of November in addition to that at Westlecot at the end of March.

He had had held several 'marker' courses in his area, all of which had been well attended and was in the course of arranging more in the near future.

#### Area 6 – John Davies

John reported that he had arranged the four yearly seminar for Cornwall in October, but had had to cancel a 'marker' course to be held over two days at Dorchester due to lack of interest. After a discussion it was felt that whilst it might be better to spread this course over two days in some areas the distances that people had to travel to attend meant that they were unwilling to do this twice whereas they were willing to travel on one occasion for a longer one day course.

### **10. AGM**

Vernon confirmed that the AGM would take place on Sunday 26 April at Leamington. Start time 11.00.

There were two officers coming up for re-election this year, Chairman and Deputy Chairman. He had received nominations for both of them. No one else had been nominated for those posts.

He had also received a nomination for himself to continue as Secretary/ Treasurer as he had originally agreed to combine the roles for just one year.

He would be publishing the Agenda at the beginning of April.

## 11. Any other business

- a) Vernon had received an enquiry from Drakes Pride asking if we were prepared to put a link to their website on ours in return for a supply of chalk sprays to be sold for Association funds. This was agreed.
- b) Bob raised the question of how far Allan had got with getting enough tutors and examiners for his programme. It was agreed that this should be discussed with Allan.
- c) Bob asked if there was any feedback on the document he had prepared for issue to those 'working' at Leamington. It was agreed that this would be circulated to all EC members.
- d) Brian asked whether it was possible to include marking for the visually impaired in 'marker' courses. It was agreed that this was something that needed to be raised with Allan.

## 12. Next meetings

It was agreed that the meetings for the following year would be:-

August 16	10.30	Leamington
October 18	10.30	Oxford
February 14	10.30	Oxford

There being no further business the Chairman closed the meeting at 13.05, and wished everyone a safe journey home and looked forward to seeing them at the AGM.

M Wellington  
Chairman